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Week 6 Updates: Status and Outgoing Message Formatting

Tue, 07/10/2007 - 03:41 — [jeff](#)

This week led to several new features in [msimprpl](#), focused on status and text formatting improvements.

Buddies on your buddy list now are updated with their status (away, online, idle, or offline), and you can set your own status (to away, online, or hidden). You'll can also go idle, depending on how your Pidgin preferences are set (I just use I'dle Mak'er to explicitly set idle for testing) . Unlike other IM protocols, all of these statuses are exclusive -- only one can set at a time.

I briefly included a "Sign in as hidden" option in the protocol preferences, but removed it after realizing it could be replaced by a built-in feature of Pidgin (confirmed by suggestions on the devel mailing list). I now set the status of msimprpl to the current Pidgin status when signing on. If you want to sign on as hidden, just make sure you have your status in Pidgin set to "invisible" when signing in. You can now also sign in as away if you would like. No need for an additional option.

I worked on adding support for sending formatted text. Pidgin allows the user to enter formatted text using the GUI, which is sent as HTML. To enable the GUI options to format text, you need to set the PURPLE_CONNECTION_HTML bit in PurpleConnection's flag field (had to ask on #pidgin to find this out, since I've only been setting flags in the PurpleProtocolInfo struct before, never PurpleConnection). I parse Pidgin's HTML using xmlnode to convert it to msim markup. Fortunately I could reuse many of the same functions I wrote to convert msim markup to HTML: both operations now use a single function, `msim_convert_xml`. As a result, you can now send bold, italic, and underline text, with any font face (but nesting formatting is not yet supported).

I added `msim_color_to_purple()` to convert msim's `rgb(rr,gg,bb)` color specification into an HTML-style color specification for libpurple (`#rrggbb`). Now you can display incoming color text.

I removed the RC4 implementation in msimprpl, now completely relying on libpurple to provide RC4 for authentication. Previously, the RC4 implementation in msimprpl was `#ifdef'd` out, but now it is no longer in the code at all. This means msimprpl from now on requires libpurple 2.0.1 or greater.

Increased the password length limit to 10 characters, to match the official client.

Added code to disconnect if no messages were received in a reasonable amount of time. The msim servers send a keepalive (ka) message about every 124 seconds, so no incoming messages means that the connection was lost. This is important because otherwise you have no way of knowing that you lost the connection.

I also fixed various bugs, and submitted my midterm student survey. Looking at the questions, I could have more interaction with the community and my mentor. This blog counts for something, and I've made use of the mailing list and IRC in the recent past, but the interaction could be greater. After all, that is what the open source community is all about.

I heard from Scott Ellis [about](#) his [MySpaceIM plugin for Miranda](#) ([Miranda IM](#) is a popular Win32-only instant messaging program). Scott thanked me for my [protocol specification](#), which he used to implement the login sequence, but he has gotten pretty far in coding the features of the MySpaceIM protocol for Miranda IM. This plugin could be worth checking out if you are a Windows user. It will be good to have some competition (at least in the Windows arena) and another open source developer to share ideas on the protocol with - Scott has already updated the protocol specification wiki page with information on the 'idle' state, which I incorporated into msimprpl.

More to come.

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